

"...the knowledge of the higher arts of war is not acquired except by experience and the study of history of wars and the study of the battles of great captains" — thus advised Napoleon and others who made their mark on the pages of history.

GOVERNMENT ARSENALS

for self-respect
and
national security

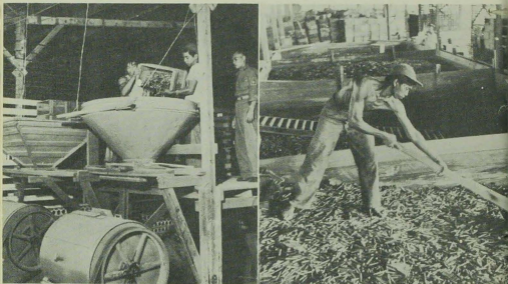
By Ely A. Agbayani

Government arsenals have assumed an important role in the scheme of national defense and security in the modern era

BEFORE the declaration of the Pacific war, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt issued a military order on July 26, 1941 placing the organized elements of the then Army of the Philippines in the active service of their equivalent components in the Armed Forces of the United States. The military order further provided specifically that the organized units of the Philippine Commonwealth Army were to be in the service of the armed forces of the United States for the period of the then existing emergency. That emergency had actually developed into a shooting war which involved

400,000 Filipino officers and men inducted into the service of the Armed Forces of the United States during World War II, 300,000 of whom were recognized guerrillas and the remaining 100,000, regularly inducted members of the USAFFE.

As a result of the horrors of war, out of the 400,000 officers and men of the then Army of the Philippines, 100,000 became casualties, not because they lacked the training desired, but because these officers and men lacked the necessary supporting arms in the protracted defense of Bataan, Corregidor and the Southern islands while the Japanese in-



Into machine devised by ordnance personnel, faulty ammunition are poured and the rust is scrapped off (left photo). After the soaking, the bullets are air-dried in open containers, then examined one by one (middle photo). Placed in belts or in M-1 clips, the re-conditioned bullets are ready for use against dissidents and outlaws.

vaders had an overwhelming superiority and command with these arms.

Object Lessons

Aware of the unpreparedness of the Allied powers during the last war, military men like Major General Calixto Duque, one-time AFP chief of staff who had been one of the survivors of the last war, and who had been following the advices of great captains like Napoleon and Frederick the Great, commented not on the strategical or tactical points

of the results of the last global war, but on the necessity of an arsenal that would produce these vital arms and ammunition.

The general said: "With the development of new weapons of warfare, such as guided missiles, rockets, and the atomic energy, there will be no more time either to train the needed manpower or for the production of material and supplies by manufacturers after the declaration of war. It is necessary that before war begins airplanes, guns and oth-



Likewise, Senator Ruperto Kangleon, one of the most distinguished figures in World War II, underscored to his countrymen, when he was still Secretary of National Defense, the necessity of preparing this country for emergency. The preparation this country needs is the establishment of a government arsenal.

Munition Plant

It should be borne in mind that national security is and had always been a must project of any nation, big or small, because in the defense of a country, it is not manpower alone that wins the war, but also and more important the weapons which its manpower uses in repelling aggressors. It is equally essential that these weapons be made ready at all times for use of the already-trained reserves.

Senator Kangleon therefore introduced, during the last session of Congress, Senate Bill No. 352 entitled "Arsenal Bill", but this bill was allegedly killed by pressures from some quarters.

er equipment be in the hands of troops."

Viewed from the standpoint of said statement of General Duque who is considered one of the foremost military strategists in the country who have a firm grasp of the local military scheme, the lessons learned as a result of the last war are not a matter for conjecture. The general is for military preparedness. He is agitating for the preparation of the Philippines not for military aggression but for national security.

It will be recalled that Major General Robert Cannon, then Chief of the JUSMAG, in a letter to the Secretary of National Defense, discouraged the establishment of a munition plant in the Philippines because he believed that "from the military viewpoint, the present strength of the AFP and that of the foreseeable force could not normally use the total product of the proposed plant." Furthermore, Cannon said, the fact that the machinery, spare parts, replacements and raw materials for



Sen. Ruperto Kangleon

such plant would have to be imported, does not make expenditures for the arsenal advisable.

Local industrialists, however, said that some of the raw materials needed are available locally, and that labor here in running one such plant is very much cheaper. Furthermore, raw materials imported will occupy less shipping space than that occupied by imported finished products. The value of raw materials is less than that of finished products, and so the shipping and insurance charges will equally be less.

Local Materials

The much needed ammonium nitrate, according to local experts, can be produced by the Maria Cristina Hydro-Electric Plant which is at present turning out ammonium sulphate for fertilizer. Lead and iron ore, abundant in this country, could be utilized in the manufacture of ammunition instead of importing them from Japan.

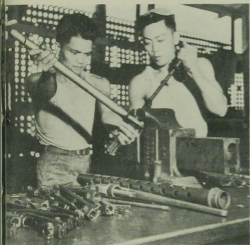
Although Senate Bill No. 352 was

shelved during the last session, the author of the bill did not stop his agitation for establishment of the arsenal. He pushed through with more vigor as well as encouragement from endorsing veterans quarters and the Secretary of National Defense, and from those who suffered in Bataan and Corregidor, his munition plant project. A recommendation of the Department of National Defense supporting the bill and its author called the attention of the lawmaking body to the heavy price paid by Filipino soldiers during the war when they went to the battlefield wholly unprepared and totally dependent upon the United States for military supplies. The said sad experiences during World War II, still vivid in the minds of survivors, were a result of the lack of facilities to produce the arms and ammunition needed to continue a more effective resistance against the enemy. They are a grim reminder of the urgency of approving the arsenal project of Senator Kangleon.

Expenditures

The proposal for establishment of a government arsenal which was approved during the second session of the Third Congress of the Philippines is in the right direction for national security, self-respect and a sound investment. The appropriation involved in the project is ₱5,145,193.00 as an initial capital to run the government arsenal.

Senator Kangleon, when briefed two months ago by Colonel Manuel Salientes, AFP logistics chief, on the estimated production cost and output



Above photo shows spare parts of side-arms and high-powered rifles which are used in the ordnance shops provided for by the Mutual Defense Assistance Pact.

of the ammunition plant, was told that the factory, will originally have an output of 21 million rounds of caliber .30 and .45 a year. Salientes estimated that the yearly production cost is P2,590,006.00 or P.1234 per ammunition manufactured which is very much lower than an imported ammunition. On this point alone, it can be safely said that the investment would be sound. Besides the dividends in terms of self-respect and national security would be great. Labor in the plant could be minimized further by utilizing Armed Forces of the Philippines personnel in the production of the vital materials.

Ramifications

Senator Kangleon explained, when he introduced the bill, that the establishment of a government arse-



If the bullets look all right (photo above), samples from each cannister are test-fired in firing chambers before issued to troops.

nal would go a long way in easing our total dependence upon the United States for our basic military arms and ammunition, as well as work towards the gradual industrialization of our country.

While we have seemed to have accepted the flattering role of a leader nation in Asia, the wretched fact remains that up to now we cannot even fire the guns doled out by Uncle Sam unless we request for bullets to load the same. The Philippines has depended and is still depending upon US aid through the Mutual Defense Assistance Pact for all her military equipment, ammunition and other supplies. Under this arrangement, there seems to be no problem at all. Yet the equally wretched fact remains that in most cases, as revealed by Senator Kang-



Photo above shows the graves of unknown soldiers — a proof of the price of unpreparedness as in the last war. These soldiers went to war with inadequate ammunition.

leon, the kind, quantity and quality of arms, ammunition and equipment made available to us are often subject to the dictates and limitations imposed by the United States authorities. Under such considerations, Kangleon said, it can not be denied that the training, organization, armament and equipment and even the development of our military establishment are virtually under the control of the United States.

In defining his stand for the establishment of a government arsenal, or the operation of the small-arms ammunition plant, which is the initial plant of the arsenal to be constructed, Senator Kangleon pointed out that it is not the intention of the government to do away with our present system of procurement under US aid of the types of ammunition to be produced. According to him the objective can be attained only

when all the other plants of the arsenal under the provision of said Act shall have been constructed.

Merits of Arsenal

Advancing his opinion on the advantages of having a government arsenal, Kangleon enumerated five merits aside from the national prestige to be gained in the establishment and operation of the arsenal.

These are:

- (1) It will enable the government to supply a substantial portion of the peacetime need of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Police Forces for these types of ammunition;
- (2) It will provide a nucleus for a research center for the design and development of all types of arms and ammunition for military purposes;
- (3) It will encourage the establishment of related industries by

private enterprise the products of which will find ready market in the different plants of the arsenal;

(4) It will establish an agency for mobilizing the industrial resources of the country in the event of war; and

(5) It will provide the population with the much-needed experience and technical know how in the mass production methods and techniques employed in modern industrial plants.

New Office

As stated above — the facts which strongly helped in the immediate approval of Senate Bill No. 352 — this Act designated the agency with which to carry out the operation of a government arsenal. It created the Division of Munitions, with the Secretary of National Defense exercising supervision and control over this government arsenal, with a chief of the division as its adviser.

The Chief of the Division of Munitions is charged with the responsibility of making continuous study of and advising the Secretary of National Defense on all matters pertaining to the design, development, manufacture, procurement, stockpiling, and allocation of small arms, mortars and other infantry weapons, ammunition for these weapons, and other munition; of recommending policies, rules and regulations to the Secretary of National Defense for the efficient operation, maintenance and security of the government ar-

senal; and devising ways and means for the efficient mobilization of civilian industry to augment the production of the government arsenal in an emergency.

The appointment of the Chief of the Division of Munitions is made by the President of the Philippines with the consent of the Commission on Appointment and shall receive an annual compensation of ₱7,200.00.

Subject to the approval of the Secretary of National Defense, the Division of Munitions will have such number of military and civilian personnel as the Chief of the Division may deem necessary by detail, whenever possible, from the Armed Forces of the Philippines. No person shall be appointed Chief of the Division unless he is a natural-born citizen of the Philippines, a chemical or mechanical engineer by profession with at least five years' experience in ordnance service.

For the safety of communities adjacent to the plant, the construction and location of the munition plants shall be consistent with the requirements of security and the principles of modern warfare.

The establishment of a government arsenal therefore, a project long dead before it was born, was resurrected. It became a reality from a dream envisioned by Senator Kangleon, in whose memory are still vivid the devastation and great loss of precious lives during the Japanese invasion due to our lack of facilities to produce and manufacture the arms and ammunition needed for effective defense.